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One Year Ago in Figure Four Weekly (Issue 235)

by Bryan Alvarez

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NWO reforms in Russo's big angle

After the worst Thunder ever and a disappointing Starrcade, the New World Order reformed with Scott Hall, Jeff Jarrett, Kevin Nash and Bret Hart in the climax of a very good Nitro angle that Vince Russo said publicly had been built towards for months and would begin the turnaround for WCW. Basically, Russo took the angle responsible for WCW's turnaround (NWO) and the angle responsible for the WWF's turnaround (Montreal screwjob) and merged them into one big angle he believes will turn WCW around again.

Whether that will happen won't be determined for the next few months. The Starrcade show, which was simply a set-up for the big angle on Nitro, was a disappointment, although Russo claimed on WCW live that they'd "sacrificed" the PPV to get over the angle the next night on a show that would be seen by far more viewers. The Nitro rating improved slightly, but Raw still killed them. However, the reaction to the Nitro show was generally positive, which means word-of-mouth should help the rating grow for Thunder and Nitro. If that's the case, this is good news for WCW. If the rating remains the same, or lower, next week, they've still got a major hill to climb.

The new NWO is expected to remain small and elite for several months. The original NWO lost a lot of its lustre when guys who weren't perceived as stars started being added regularly with little build-up. Russo's current crop of idiots, including Creative Control, Hennig and La Parka, will be dropped in favor of the new NWO crew.

Complete reports on the Nitro show and this week's ratings are available elsewhere in this issue.

Starrcade opened with the announcement that Scott Hall would not be able to compete in his scheduled ladder match. Hall injured his knee last weekend and then aggravated his groin while trying to favor it. At that point, WCW decided to take him out back and shoot him, but Standards and Practices nixed that idea. Hall had an MRI done on Thursday and was told Friday that he couldn't work Starrcade. WCW immediately announced on its website and on the WCW Live show that he would not be there and that a suitable replacement would be found for the ladder match with Benoit. WCW deserves credit for telling the truth and not doing something stupid like booking an angle where someone ran him over with a car.

Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan and Scott Hudson did commentary.

1. Big Vito & Johnny The Bull beat Disco Inferno & Lash Laroux. Tony Marinera hung out at ringside with the Italians. Vito looked good in the ring and Johnny was really good for a guy who graduated from the Power Plant. The story is that this was only his fifth pro match, which is pretty impressive. The work was good although the crowd wasn't into it too much until the finish. Disco hit a frog splash and then went on a tear. Unfortunately, he hit Lash with a Stunner and then walked right into an implant DDT by Vito for the pinfall. It was a good, clean finish and the crowd was into it. After the match, the bad guys put Disco in a bodybag and then stuffed him into the trunk of their car, presumably to toss him into the drink later. Good opener. ***

Tony announced that Scott Hall had been stripped of the WCW US Title and that the belt had been awarded to Chris Benoit. He said that there would be no ladder match on the show. Benoit then came down to the ring and said titles were meant to be won, and that he'd come to Starrcade to kick ass. He issued an open challenge to anyone in the back for a ladder match.

2. Madusa beat Evan Karagias to win the WCW Cruiserweight Title. This was surprisingly not horrible. Evan came out with Spice. I guess Standards and Practices doesn't monitor PPVs or something because there was a lot of man on woman action here. Madusa almost killed him with a botched powerbomb early. "Boring!" the fans screamed, despite the fact that this was very not boring. In fact, it was downright scary at times. Evan did a pretty swank dive from the top rope to the floor on Madusa. Finish saw Spice turn on Evan and give him a low blow, allowing Madusa to German him for the pin and the belt. Hopefully, she'll throw this one in the garbage like she did to the WWF Women's Title. The women left together and Evan became the first man to be screwed by both Spice and Madusa, and not enjoy it. *

3. Norman Smiley beat Meng to retain the WCW Hardcore Title. Norman came out with a dumpster full of plunder. Meng pushed the dumpster into him and Norman ran away screaming. They brawled backstage. Meng no-sold literally everything and destroyed Norman. Fit Finley and Knobs finally ran in and tried to render Meng extinct with chair and trash can shots. Meng no-sold it like he was Godzilla fending off helicopters. Finally, Finley clonked him with a pipe, which I'll bet was made of steel, and Norman got the pin. This was amusing, but not particularly good. Meng took the term "no-selling" to a whole new level. 3/4*

A package arrived for Crazy David. It was a golden crowbar. He was jolly.

4. Revolution beat Hacksaw Jim Duggan and his Mystery Men. Duggan came out and introduced his partners. "The Varsity Club!" he screamed. Mike Rotundo, Kevin Sullivan and Rick Steiner came out. This was the epitome of an anticlimactic announcement. Like anyone in this crowd knew anything about a stable from 1989. There are tons of fans now who didn't even pop when Ultimate Warrior's music played on Raw a few months ago for that Howard Finkle skit. Whose bright idea was this? Kimona, who signed last week, came out with the Varsity Club wearing a skimpy little cheerleader outfit, and even that didn't get a response. Douglas had his

arm in a brace this week and did commentary. The match itself was horrendous since Duggan was in the entire time. Finally, an eight-person brawl broke out. The Varsity Club ended up turning on Duggan and stomping a mudhole in him. Shane then ran in and pinned Duggan for the win. Absolutely horrible. They said Duggan was going to have to denounce American on Nitro. That'll beat Raw for sure. -*

Misfits jumped Oklahoma and put him into a cage.

5. Vampiro d. Steve Williams—DQ. Oklahoma, who was brought to ringside in the cage, did commentary on his own headset. No heat. Williams almost murdered Vamp at one point with a very disturbing overhead belly-to-belly from the top rope. Misfits ran in at one point for amateur hour. Even Tony said they needed to stick to music. Williams shoved down the referee twice and got DQ'd. What a shitty finish. Williams refused to do the job, so blame him. 1/2*

5b. Vampiro d. Oklahoma. The pre-match stipulation said Vamp got five minutes in the ring with Oklahoma if he beat Williams. Since Vamp was down dead from the match, Oklahoma wanted to get into the ring to start the five minutes immediately. I guess normally they wait an hour or so. Oklahoma beat him up for awhile. Then the Misfits ran in and helped Vamp get the upper hand. My God, was this awful. Vamp finally did a Poor Man's Michinoku Driver for the pinfall. Hideous. -**

Curt Hennig tried to talk to Russo backstage, but Vince said he just didn't have his head on straight since he foresaw "something big" going down later.

6. Creative Control & Curt Hennig d. Harlem Heat & Midnight. It wouldn't be a WCW pay-per-view without a match that made no sense. This was billed as a number-one contender's match for the Tag belts even though there were three participants on each team. So which two would get the shot if their team won? Would all three get the shot? Would Hall and Nash get to add another man to their team? They teased dissension with Booker T and Stevie again. Yawn. I've seen this before. A few months ago, actually. Tony called Midnight "fundamentally sound". Whatever, you idiot. Booker yelled at Stevie and told him to just leave. Control got the pin on Booker after Hennig hit him with an object. Midnight tried to make the save but Stevie had her distracted. Not much to this. *

Dustin cut a promo backstage. He was wearing a Dusty Rhodes T-shirt that said "World Tour 2000" on the back, and mentioned Dusty's name repeatedly. This was all rather disturbing. Jarrett ran in and their match started immediately.

7. Jeff Jarrett beat Dustin Rhodes in a Bunkhouse Brawl. "Bunkhouse Brawl" is carnny for "Hardcore Match". They brawled everywhere, and it wasn't particularly good. Dustin duct taped the referee to the ropes at one point, apparently just so Russo could hit his Disabled Referees Quota for the evening. Hennig ran out and released the referee. Dustin hit Shattered Dreams on both Jarrett and Hennig. The referee kept trying to count but Hennig pulled him out of the ring

on at least two different occasions. Yawn. Jarrett finally got the win with a guitar shot off the middle rung of a ladder. Not particularly memorable and the crowd was dead. *1/4

8. Dallas Page d. David Flair in a Crowbar on a Pole match. David attacked DDP after running in from the crowd. He hit him in the ribs with a crowbar and Page fell down outside the ring. The referee, after checking on Page, called David Penzer over. Penzer started to announce that DDP couldn't continue, but Page suddenly sprang to life like The Mummy and grabbed Penzer, who uttered the following immortal line: "BRAAACK!!!" The match continued and was better than probably anybody expected going in. David has improved from being horrible to just being very bad. By spring, he could just suck. Page did a great job carrying him. David got the crowbar, but missed a swing and Page hit him with a Diamond Cutter for the win. After the match, Page hit him with another Diamond Cutter off the top rope. DDP picked up the crowbar in preparation to murder David, but Daphne Unger, the crazed fan from the Nitro Party video, ran in and saved her dear David. Page threatened to give Charles Robinson a Diamond Cutter, but changed his mind. *3/4

9. Sting beat Lex Luger—DQ. Backstage, Sting took Liz's mace away and gave her a large container of it. He said it was "high octane" mace. Luger attacked Sting at the bell. Same shit as always, just slower. Liz ran in and tried to mace Sting, as everyone in the entire world expected, but it turned out that he'd given her a container of Silly String. This was actually funny. For once in his life, Sting was not made out to be a complete idiot. Sting ran wild and went for the Scorpion. Liz snuck up behind him with a bat, but he caught her. Sting told Liz to put the bat down. She did. So Sting turned back around to tend to Luger. So much for him not being an idiot. Liz took the bat and NIZZFUCKINGIZZAILED HIM RIGHT IN THE GOLLDURN FACE. I thought Sting was dead for sure. The ref called for the bell. After the match, Liz put Sting's arm in a chair and Luger stomped on it and beat it repeatedly with a bat. This was turning into a GREAT injury angle until all the security guys came down and literally dragged Sting away in about as careless a manner as I've ever seen. Liz almost saved this with her choice bat shot, but the match still blew. Sting will now take several months off to get surgery to remove bone chips in his elbow. When you think about it, he's had the easiest job of anyone in the history of professional wrestling. 1/4*

10. Sid beat Kevin Nash in a Powerbomb Match. Get a load of this booking. Nash hit Sid with his usual repulsive offense. Sid fought back with his even more repulsive offense. There was this one intricate spot where Sid pulled back to deliver a punch but DELIVERED A BODYSLAM INSTEAD. Compelling. Ref took a bump. Sid then gave Nash this HORRENDOUS powerbomb. Sid got him about halfway up, meaning Nash was in exactly the same position Giant was in when Nash dropped him right on his head at Souled Out and almost killed him. Nash froze, saw his whole life flash before his eyes, and then looked up with sheer terror and said the following immortal words to Sid: "No, no, please!" I can say with some confidence that Nash truly feared for his very existence. Sid, to his credit, held on tight, hoisted Nash a little higher, and dropped him from about one foot in the air. It was SO ATROCIOUS. Jarrett then ran in and hit Sid with a guitar. Nash got up and tried to powerbomb Sid, but his "back gave out". He tried again to no avail. Finally, Nash woke up the referee, showed him the fallen Sid, and claimed that he'd used

a powerbomb. The ref believed the evil heel Nash, and called for the bell. This was the absolute epitome of Kevin Nash's laziness and Vince Russo's incompetence, and was one of those matches that was so unbelievably horrible that it made for great comedy. -***

11. Chris Benoit beat Jeff Jarrett in a ladder match to retain the US Title. Benoit laid waste to Jarrett and then went out to get the ladder. Jarrett did a baseball slide dropkick and the ladder hit Benoit right in the face, busting open his nose. Benoit started bleeding like a true mofo. Lots of cool spots including one where Benoit got his knee caught in the ladder and Jarrett tipped it over on top of him. They did the usual ladder spots as well, such as Jarrett tipping over the ladder so Benoit necked the top rope, and Benoit tipped it over so Jarrett landed crotch-first. Jarrett also delivered what may have been the first top-rope dropkick of his career, and it knocked the ladder over causing Benoit to take this phat bump from three-quarters of the way up. Finish saw Benoit get control and climb to the very top of the ladder. Although the belt was right next to him, he chose instead to DESTROY Jarrett with a diving headbutt. You knew they were building towards that spot and it was THE BOMB. Benoit then climbed up and grabbed the belt for the win. Great match. ***3/4

12. Bret Hart beat Goldberg to retain the WCW Title. If you've seen Survivor Series in Montreal you already know the finish of this match. Bret worked over Goldberg's leg throughout most of this match, and in the meantime we had three ref bumps. It was pretty obvious where this was going. After the third bump, Goldberg hit the big spear and signalled for the jackhammer. At that point, Roddy Piper, looking totally out of it, limped down to ringside with his arm in a brace. Bret clipped Goldberg's knee and started to apply the Sharpshooter. Before it was even all the way applied, Piper climbed into the ring and called for the bell. Bret played his Shawn Michaels role perfectly, exhibiting confusion as to why the match had been stopped. Piper took the belt and began walking to the back. They abruptly went off the air, just like they did in Montreal. This pay-per-view would have ended on a better note had Goldberg went backstage and punched out Vince Russo in his dressing room. **3/4

Special Thanks

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WWF News and Notes

- Raw still killed Nitro, but Russo can take at least a little solace in knowing his rating was up slightly and the WWF's was down. But only slightly. Raw scored a 5.82 composite off hourly numbers of 5.53 and 6.14 to Nitro's 3.21 (3.93 and 2.92 and 2.90). Raw still won every quarter

handily. Heat drew a 3.44, which is down almost a full point from last week, Thunder drew a 2.30 (2.24 and 2.34), Smackdown drew a 4.44 (4.51 and 4.34), and ECW drew a 1.00.

- The WWF received more good news last week when Steve Austin's spinal surgery was moved up to January 11th. There is still very little chance he'll be ready to return to action, even if he heals 100%, by WrestleMania, but it does make it a virtual certainty that he'll be able to make an appearance in some capacity. Austin is pretty excited to get the surgery over with as soon as possible and is telling people that he expects it to be no big deal. For the first time in a long while, he's also said to be excited about the possibility of returning as a full-time wrestler.

- Chris Jericho and Vince McMahon got into an argument backstage at the Raw tapings Tuesday, with some sources saying it escalated into a shouting match. Apparently, Vince made a comment to the effect that he was unhappy with Jericho's recent workrate, and Jericho accused him of letting DX get into his ear. Vince was also said to be unhappy about the fact that Jericho was getting over as a babyface. Jericho pointed out that he'd been booked in a fashion that would make him into a babyface, that he'd done everything the WWF had asked of him in his feud with Chyna, and that it was the fans that were turning him face. Eventually, Jericho, McMahon and DX all sat down and apparently ironed a lot of things out. X-Pac agreed to work with Jericho on his ring psychology and Hunter, on the Smackdown show, went as far as to say Jericho was having a good match with Prince Albert. Jericho, on his website, downplayed the situation saying that the WWF was HIS company and that everything was cool. Jim Ross, in his online report, said that he was in the room and that there was absolutely no shouting involved (others in the room say there was) and that nobody in WCW had been trying to get in anybody's ear in the WWF (Ross would really have no way of knowing that since Hunter and X-Pac could just deny it to management). Ross did admit that some guys in the WWF were probably jealous of Jericho.

- I read the first chapter of Rock's autobiography, which is now available at www.theRock.com. Although it's ghostwritten, it wasn't nearly as bad as I expected going in. In fact, I could probably read the entire thing. It basically sounds like he told his life story to a tape recorder and then somebody did some editing and transcribing to turn it into a book. The first chapter deals with his childhood and memories of his father and grandfather and is pretty interesting. It actually reads like a Bret Hart column in many ways. The book will be available in January and is already number 7 on the Amazon.com pre-order list.

- TSN in Canada announced that they would be cancelling the Tuesday afternoon airing of Raw beginning on February 1, 2000. From that point forward, Raw will be shown only at 9:00 PM and midnight on Mondays. The Tuesday afternoon airing had been drawing around 175,000 viewers, a third of them being kids under 18. Eleven percent of the viewers were kids aged two to eleven. TSN received 31 complaints about the show in the last 16 months, which actually doesn't sound like much. TSN stated publicly that editing the show was just not enough, plus editing resulted in a loss of context in storylines. In other words, it would have been like watching Nitro. TSN said they would still be monitoring the Monday showings and edit them if need be. This news is all a

reaction to a suggestion by the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commissioner.

- The WWF edited Miss Kitty's flashing off the Viewer's Choice pay-per-view replay, although not the DirecTV version. This, coupled with the fact that WWF made absolutely no mention of the situation on Raw the following day, indicates that somebody, probably Viewer's Choice, came down mega-hard on the WWF for that stunt. The word is that there probably won't be nudity of any sort on any WWF pay-per-view again for a very long time. Despite the problems, the WWF had Miss Kitty on Byte This last week and spent almost an hour talking about her breasts. She said she was happy with the PPV because she liked to show her breasts in public and didn't wear any underwear for real. She said her punishment for the stunt was a spanking. She said it was cold when she flashed and that the WWF had FORCED her to strip. Uh huh, sure. She said it was no big deal because the fans paid for it. She also said that the WWF hadn't crossed The Line yet because she had yet to have sex on live TV. Man, the WWF sure backed away from that situation.
- SkyTV in the UK announced last week that they would not be airing the Royal Rumble PPV in January. While some have theorized that this has everything to do with Miss Kitty's topless episode at Armageddon, the reality is it probably had more to do with the fact that SkyTV's contract with the WWF expires later this month. The problem with the Kitty rationale is that the PPV aired live in the UK after 1:00 AM, so it shouldn't have been too big a deal, particularly in the UK where nudity airs on network TV somewhat regularly. There is a good chance that Channel Four will outbid SkyTV for the rights to WWF programming, which would put at least a few of the shows on network television in the UK. The SkyTV satellite programs are only seen by 200,000 people or so per week, and a national television deal would be huge positive news for the company.
- D-Lo Brown was also on Byte This last week and said he had fourteen months left on his contract and was not going to WCW.
- The WWF will be doing another Halftime Heat show this year during the Superbowl. Last year's show drew a super rating and featured a WWF Title change, as Mick Foley beat Rock in an Empty Arena match after getting into a food fight with him backstage.
- The WWF got a CHEERS in TV Guide last week for toning down. Another indication that nobody who writes for TV Guide actually watches any TV.
- Cody Boynes, who does a weekly report for many newspapers across the nation, called Armageddon possibly the best pay-per-view of all time. Really. I heard it with my own ears.
- For a long time, the Mean Street Posse have been looked down upon in the locker room due to the fact that they basically got a break because they were friends with Shane McMahon. Lately, they have been starting to earn at least a little more respect from some of the guys who feel they're paying their dues by repeatedly getting their asses kicked by the stiff-as-all-hell

Acolytes. The Posse does train fairly regularly with Tom Pritchard, so it's not like they aren't making some effort to improve. Pete Gas, of course, is the star student.

- Chyna is on the cover of the April Muscular Development magazine.
- WWFE closed at an all-time low of 14 and 3/16 on December 20th. At press time, it was up slightly to 14 and 15/16.

WWF On Tour

San Juan, PR (December 15): Rasta Man d. Jesus Cristobal, Huracan Castillo & Apollo Dantes d. Taka Michinoku & Midian (what the hell?), Tori d. Ivory, Sean Morely (Val Venis) d. Shawn Stasiak. Victor Quinones booked this show and brought in Stasiak, who is still fired from the WWF. Don't start any rumors. Savio Vega d. Prince Albert, Road Dogg d. Miguelito Perez, Hardy d. Ricky Banderas & Ricky Santana. That's too many Rickys. Kane & Godfather d. Viscera & Undertaker. Undertaker was said to be 30 pounds fatter than the last time he appeared on TV. He moved really slowly and still looked to be in a lot of pain, which was why they put him in a tag match as opposed to a singles bout, as was originally booked.

Coamo, PR (December 16): Rasta Man d. Ricky Banderas, Apollo Dantes d. Shawn Stasiak, Ivory d. Tori, Road Dogg d. Huracan Castillo—DQ in a Hardcore match (?), Godfather d. Prince Albert, Sean Morley & Ricky Santana d. Hardy, Undertaker & Viscera & Midian d. Savio Vega & Miguelito Perez & Kane. This show only drew about 600 fans.

WWF On Television

WWF Smackdown (December 16 — Taped December 14): The show opened with Hunter and Stephanie having a talent meeting in the back. All of the superstars were sitting around on chairs like they were in school. Steph said Vince and Shane were gone and there were going to be some changes. HHH said some guys were going to be getting a chance to shine and everyone would be treated fairly. It was hilarious when they played Hunter's music as the meeting adjourned. This had to be a knock on one of Russo's talent meetings... Jericho beat "Prince Allen". Chyna and Kitty came out to watch, and Chyna ended up hitting Allen with the nightstick leading to the pinfall... Stephanie told Hunter that she was going to ringside to check out the Test vs. Kurt Angle match. Hunter was not happy. She told him she was going no matter what he said... Kurt Angle d. Test—DQ. Test took him up top and started pounding on his head like they do in almost every single match and Stephanie, who was doing commentary, immediately screamed: "Ring the bell!" You know, I'd like to go just ONE SHOW without having to be reminded of that damn Survivor Series finish. Angle celebrated like he'd won another gold medal... Stephanie is so much better as a heel... DX attacked Test and left him laying. That poor bastard... They showed Jeff Hardy's senton bomb off the top of the cage ELEVEN TIMES. I ask you, how many times did WCW show Chris Benoit's dive off the cage on Nitro? If sure as shit

wasn't eleven times on one single show. That's one reason people get over in the WWF and they don't in WCW... HHH signed an Outlaws vs. Stooges match for later... Matt Hardy beat Jeff Hardy in a good match with no heat. The funniest part of this match was when Cole, out of nowhere, revealed the alarming news that Matt and Jeff knew each other well. Lawler almost went into hysterics at this point, mocking Cole and asking him if he knew how stupid he sounded. "Of course they knew each other well, they're BROTHERS!" screamed Lawler. This was hilarious... Tori ran into HHH and Stephanie's office and said she would never be humiliated again. Steph said Tori was going to be humiliated because she was going to face her (Steph) in a match later. Steph ended up substituting X-Pac for herself, and X-Pac pinned Tori clean in seconds. Kane carried Tori away afterwards... HHH signed Posse vs. Acolytes again... Mick Foley beat Al Snow. They brawled everywhere. At one point, Mick had to get on his stomach and go down the stairs backwards to get backstage. That was really sad to see. They brawled back into the DX dressing room. Seconds later, Al fell out and Foley pinned him. Rock then came out of the DX dressing room and revealed that he'd put the DX sign on the door of his own locker room... Didn't I see that on Thunder last week?... Edge beat Christian. This was a pretty good match until the finish. Edge did a roll-up but Christian reversed it so Edge's shoulders were on the mat. The ref counted one. Edge then sat back so Christian's shoulders were down. The ref counted two and three. Uh. What in the hell was that? Both guys looked pissed and even the announcers had to say it was a bad call... Acolytes killed Posse. Faarooq was over like a mutha in his hometown. At one point he hit Joey with a tomahawk chop for the FSU fans and Joey sold it. Rodney got KILLED with a chairshot for good measure. Total carnage... Lillian interviewed Ross. He said Stephanie was acting like a word that rhymed with witch and started with a 'b'. After commercial, HHH chewed Ross out and Steph gave him this chop to the neck. At least someone in the company watches All Japan tapes. Poor Ross had to fly all the way in for that... Rikishi & Too Cool d. Hollys & Viscera. Viscera accidentally squashed Bob and then walked out on him. So Bob got pinned. The crowd went MORE HOSS THAN EVER for Too Cool's fly dancing after the match... Outlaws beat Patterson & Brisco clean. This wasn't horrible, but I'd never want to watch it again. Patterson may have outworked Billy Gunn... Rock NF (no finish) Big Show. Hunter and Steph came out on the ramp and said it was a lumberjack match. DX, Dudleys, Posse (who were still alive), Viscera (who was still fat), Albert, Midian, Hollys, Snow, Gangrel and Kurt Angle all surrounded the ring. Match ended when all the lumberjacks ran in to beat up Rock and Show. Mankind then made the save with plunder. Rock hit Viscera with the World's Fattest Uranage and the People's Elbow as the show ended. Pretty fun Smackdown with some good wrestling and SOME FUCKING CLEAN FINISHES as well.

WWF Sunday Night Heat (December 19 — Taped): Right before this show came on the air, a commercial for the Armageddon PPV aired. No, not the replay, the November 12th showing. Weird... Val Venis d. Steve Blackman to retain the UK Title. Blackman actually showed signs of a soul when he went up top and did a hip-swivel gesture. Kurt Angle came down and threw Blackman's nunchakus to Venis, who used them for the pin. Blackman was actually the babyface by the end of this. Angle is getting some good heat... Backstage, Mark Henry tried to convince Godfather to team with him one more time. In this 53 second interview, both guys said the word "man" 34 different times. I'm not making that up, I actually went back and counted... A week in review video aired... Backstage, Henry was still trying to talk some nonsense into

Godfather. In 36 seconds, and I'm still not making this up, they said "man" an additional 20 times... Headbangers d. Gangrel & Midian. Nothing of note... Jonathan Coachman debuted, interviewing the Dudleys. It was obviously his first day of work... A drunken Mae Young told the ho's backstage that Heat was a family show... D-Lo Brown d. Taka Michinoku clean. This was a good Heat match and D-Lo was really over... Mae Young revealed to the ho's that she was saving herself for Mark. Well, what were they doing in bed on Monday then?... Dudleys d. Godfather & Mark Henry—DQ. Godfather actually worked hard and even took a BACKDROP DRIVER from Bubba Ray. Dudleys won via DQ when Mae Young hopped on Bubba Ray's back outside the ring. Horrible finish. Decent Heat, nothing noteworthy.

Raw is Stephanie (December 20 — Live): Hunter and Steph were shown hanging out backstage with their new lackeys, the Mean Street Posse. Hunter said this would be a festive Raw. How fun!... Michael Hayes replaced Jerry Lawler, who was in LA for the Man on the Moon premiere... Outlaws d. Test in a Sucks To Be Test handicap match... Hunter signed Edge & Matt Hardy vs. Christian & Jeff as well as Kurt Angle vs. Viscera... Jeff & Christian won their match when Jeff pinned Matt after a 450. Matt got a bloody nose in here somewhere and looked messed up. This was a good match... Hunter signed Moolah & Mae Young vs. Dudleys vs. Acolytes... HHH and Steph came out and called Ross into the ring. There was crazy heat for this segment. Helmsely took Ross down and was about to break his arm when Mankind made the save. Hunter signed Foley to a Boiler Room Brawl against a Mystery Opponent later, and Steph slapped him for good measure. Crowd was really into this segment... Angle d. Viscera when Blackman helped. Bad. Viscera is so horrible. Steph hinted to HHH that she had told Blackman to help because she thought Kurt was cute. HHH didn't like that one bit... Dudleys won the three-way when Bubba pinned Mae Young. Not as horrible as I expected. Henry came down to console Mae afterwards. The look on Faarooq's face when he saw that was classic... Hunter told Stephanie that Foley's mystery opponent would be Santa Claus. It turned out to be seven Santas. The final one ended up being Hunter, who pinned Mankind after hitting him with a glass plate. Teddy Long, totally stone-faced and deadpan, raised Hunter's hand and said: "Here's the winner, Santa Claus." Now THAT was hilarious... Al Snow requested a Brahma Bull match with Rock and HHH said OK... Jericho d. Godfather when Chyna helped. They're teasing that Chyna has the hots for Chris, which means she doesn't... Bob Holly (with Terri) beat Val Venis (with BB) in a "top rope topless" match. The loser's woman had to strip topless. Yeah, sure. Hunter came out after Holly won and demanded that BB strip topless. She refused. Finally, he shielded her with his jacket and she did so. Nuclear heat for that. Like she was really going to show her boobs on free TV, you jackasses... Al Snow pinned Rock in a Brahma Bullrope match after DX interfered behind the referee's back. The Posse, watching on a monitor, jumped up and down in celebration and spilled a vase on Steph and Hunter. Hunter said they were going to have to face Too Much for that. He added that if they ever spilled water on him again he'd book them against the Acolytes every week for a year. Funny stuff. Hunter is finally coming into his own... HHH signed Show vs. Kane. If Kane lost, Tori had to spend the holidays with X-Pac... Too Cool & Phatu beat Posse. Posse cried that this was supposed to be a handicap match, to no avail. Phatu and Too Cool were over as usual... Kane d. Giant—DQ when Wide used a chair. Hunter, on the ramp with Steph, restarted the match, saying it was no DQ. Kane and Wide then got counted out, but HHH said it was Falls Count Anywhere. Giant finally pinned Kane with a

powerbomb through the announcer's table. These two mofos worked SO HARD and there is no way in hell a match between them could possibly have been any better. Not that this was great or anything. DX took Tori away afterwards. Hunter wished everyone a Merry Christmas as the show ended. How nice.

WCW News and Notes

- Tony Marinera told WCW Live that he'd had twenty concussions in his young career already, which absolutely has to be a joke, otherwise he'll be dead soon at this rate. He also said something funny when he called the Power Plant the Seventh Level of Hell. I wonder if he meant it the way I think he meant it.
- There was talk of having Ric Flair replace Jeff Jarrett in the ladder match at Starrcade. In a related sidenote, the WCW website had a poll last weekend asking fans what they wanted to see at Starrcade. Guess what the top two answers were? Ric Flair and clean finishes. Leave it to WCW to give them neither one.
- New Japan did finally end up acknowledging Liger's IWGP Title switches on Nitro.
- Chuck Zito is the guy playing the role of Big Daddy Marinara. He appeared briefly in WCW several months ago, I believe as Hulk Hogan's bodyguard. I think he went to kidnap David Flair once as well. It's hard to remember stuff like this since WCW never bothered to follow up on it. In an ironic sidenote, I had Zito Parmesana for dinner last night.
- Roddy Piper tore his bicep at Nitro last week, which was why he was wearing the brace at the PPV. Suffice it to say he won't be wrestling again anytime soon.
- Canyon and Bigelow both got scratched up by the champagne bottle shot on Thunder, although Canyon wants to keep that gimmick in his repertoire. Bigelow suffered even worse cuts on Nitro.
- A WCW breakfast cereal will be released next year. I know there's a joke here somewhere.
- The annual Warped Toys List put out by Reverend Christopher Rose listed the Al Snow doll at number three and the Buff Bagwell doll in a wheelchair at number two. The Al Snow doll is, of course, ridiculous, but the Bagwell doll has a lever that you can pull which launches Buff out of the wheelchair like a cannonball. Now THAT truly is warped.
- WCW is reportedly attempting to "stock up" on hot babes. I don't know why. When Russo books them in strip poker matches with guys, it's the guys who lose their clothes. When the Nitro Girls dance and someone ends up stripping, it's usually fat Rhonda Singh. Also, the last time I saw a mud match on WCW, I believe Rhonda was involved in that one as well. I also

believe I saw Hacksaw Duggan stripped to his underwear on Nitro. I guess that's why Russo is booking and I'm just writing a newsletter.

- ICP said they'd be back at the December 13th Nitro, but were not. The latest is that they've started their own promotion, "Juggalo Championshit Wrestling". I swear this is all true. Their first live event, which ran head-to-head with Starrcade and may have drawn a higher paid attendance, featured ICP vs. Doink & Doink to determine "who are the most clowny motherfuckers in pro wrestling". Also on the card was an exploding barbed wire match, a women's thumbtack death match, a Battle Royal to determine the new JCW Champion, and Iron Sheik vs. Izzy High in a "crack pipe on a pole match". Nothing like family fun on a Sunday night!

- Ric Flair wrestled on several house shows over the weekend. He beat Luger clean with the Figure Four, which is probably the first time that's happened since the 1980s. They're obviously kissing his ass so he won't keep trying to get his release.

WCW On Tour

Daytona, FL (December 17): Jerry Flynn d. Konnan, Jim Duggan d. Brian Knobs, Vamp d. Berlyn, Vamp d. Wall, Dallas Page d. David Flair, Jeff Jarrett d. Dustin Rhodes when Nash interfered, Ric Flair d. Lex Luger clean with the Figure Four, Bret Hart NC Goldberg.

Jacksonville, FL (December 18): Jerry Flynn d. Konnan, Jim Duggan d. Knobs, Vampiro d. Berlyn, Vampiro d. Wall, Dallas Page d. David Flair, Jeff Jarrett d. Dustin Rhodes, Ric Flair d. Lex Luger clean with the Figure Four, Bret Hart NC Goldberg.

WCW On Television

Thursday Juvie (December 16 — Taped December 14): The worst Thunder I ever saw opened with Sid and Chris Benoit coming down to the ring. Sid cut his usual nonsensical promo, this time calling the Outsiders "two shoes". It was not the strangest thing anyone would call an opponent on this show. Sid added that he would powerbomb Nash to the Earth's core at "Scarrcade". At least Sid knew the Earth had a core. Benoit, who is not normally renowned for his promo ability, sounded like Anthony Hopkins compared to Sid. They said they wanted a Tag Title match versus the Outsiders. Hennig came out with La Parka, Creative Control and Shane. Parka was wearing sunglasses over his mask. Hennig signed Sid vs. Benoit in a one-on-one match, and said if they refused to do it they would be suspended for six months. Write that one down... Tenay and Hudson ran down the Thunder card. What a mistake. Why warn the fans in advance about what shitty matches have been booked? Like fans are going to say: "You know, Smackdown is on right now, but let's keep watching Thunder because Norman Smiley vs. David Flair in a Hardcore Title match is coming up!"... Juvie came out and said: "Finally, the Juice has come back to New Orleans!" They were in Mobile. It was a screw-up last week, but now it's part of the gimmick. When the crowd booed, Juvie added: "It doesn't matter where we are!" He

joined Hudson and Tenay for commentary... "Sting" attacked Dallas Page in the lamest backstage brawl in weeks. It was over in seconds and they quickly cut away... DDP did not try to sell this fight as a shoot on the Internet... Buff d. Vampiro when Oklahoma hit him with a bottle of barbecue sauce. I think. That's what I wrote down but it sounds wrong. Regardless, there was outside interference. Williams killed Vamp with a Tiger Driver on the floor afterwards... Gene interviewed the Artist and Paisley. Artist doesn't speak... Iaukea beat Karagias in a bad match even though Karagias' shoulders were up. Juvie said this would be the jabronie match of the week. Finish came after Evan was distracted by Spice, Madusa and Paisley all arguing in the ring... DDP attacked Sting. Then, another guy wearing a Sting outfit ran in. Page ran after him screaming: "LUGER!" The announcers showed what great attention they were paying to this angle by exhibiting confusion as to whom the other Sting might be... Why is Luger attacking DDP anyway?... Duggan & Midnight d. Aysa & Saturn. Duggan was over like mad. Juvie, who usually runs down the bad workers, is inexplicably a total mark for Duggan. The segment with Midnight against Aysa was miserable. Saturn then tagged in, clotheslined Midnight and gave her a bodyslam. I thought men weren't allowed to beat up women? Douglas, on headset, broke Standards and Practices Kayfabe by calling Midnight a "bitch". Duggan pinned Saturn after hitting him with a 2x4. This was technically repulsive, but the fans loved it, so whatever. The bad guys attacked Duggan and tore his clothes off after the match, which should really attract additional young males in the important 18-24 demographic. Malenko also laced into Duggan with the most business-exposing stomps I've ever seen anyone perform... Oh yeah, Aaron Neville made the save for Duggan which resulted in no pop and probably numerous fans turning to Smackdown... David Flair NC Norman Smiley in a Hardcore match. Read that sentence again to fully comprehend how idiotic this booking is. Meng came out, ripped up David's teddy bear and then chased Norman away. Juvie then uttered the QUOTE OF THE MILLENNIUM when he said: "Now tell me please the point of this match." This bout was actually perversely entertaining and David even broke into a dance sequence when Norman did the Lewd Dance. This was easily the most entertaining moment of David's whole life... Sting came down and called out Luger. Luger came out wearing the Sting costume, which still hadn't been explained, and they got into a brawl. Sting put Luger in the rack and Luger's feet hit Liz. Sting dropped down to see if she was OK and Luger KO'd him with a bat. Security ran in to break it up. Had they just gotten into a brawl, maybe ten people would have ordered Starrcade. But since Russo ingeniously scripted Luger to come out wearing Sting's outfit as a disguise, I'll bet a thousand additional people decided to order the PPV... Berlyn came out with Wall. Didn't they break up? Williams beat Wall via DQ when Alex hit Dr. Death with a boot. Wall attacked Berlyn after the match. So I guess they have broken up now... By the way, not one clean finish yet... Dustin came down and cut a promo, saying Dusty Rhodes would never die. He may be right. Dustin wrestled Curt Hennig. Midway through, the lights went out and Jarrett floated to the ring in Dustin's old Undertaker get-up. He hit Dustin with a guitar. Guess what? DQ. What a clever booking swerve, to have Jarrett wear that stuff for a run-in. Add another 10,000 PPV buys... Jarrett cut a promo backstage. He called Dustin and Dusty "hornyackers". Add at least 250 PPV buys for that word. He said Dustin could bring anything he wanted to the Bunkhouse match, including a "bay of hail" or a "hail of bay". I'll bet at least 45 people are going to buy the show just to find out if Dustin brings a bay full of hail to ringside for their match... Sid and Benoit came out and said they'd be happy to take six months off. So Hennig came out and said they were going to team up to

wrestle a handicap match. Hennig, Parka and Control ran down to the ring for a big brawl. The bad guys killed Benoit with a ladder and the referee called for a DQ. I assume this means Sid and Benoit are suspended for six months, right?... Canyon beat DDP. I have a question. How many people do you think really knew that Canyon was in Hollywood doing stunt work and talent coordination for the WCW movie? Maybe 5 percent? Couldn't WCW have gotten some footage of Canyon on the set and then played it for a few weeks on TV in anticipation for his return? Well, they could have, but they didn't. So he's not getting much of a reaction. 95% of the fans are just wondering what in the hell he's going in that outfit and wondering why he's talking about Hollywood since they haven't seen him in any movies or on any TV shows. For what it's worth, this was easily the best match of the night, although they booked David Flair hitting DDP with a crowbar, thus ensuring that the only match of value on the show would have a screw-job finish, bringing the Clean Finish Quotient on this show to ZERO. Canyon hit Bigelow with a champagne bottle after the match and Juvie said Canyon was stealing his move (remember the tequila bottle?)... Gene said Scott Hall was injured and he'd have more news later. In typical wrestling fashion, he never did... Since Hall was dead, Nash came out for the main event alone. He faced Bret and Goldberg in a House of Pain match, where the only way to win is to handcuff your opponents to the cage. Immediately, Russo killed the concept of having a cage match by booking a run-in by Creative Control and Jeff Jarrett. Nash eventually hit Goldberg with a pipe and the good guys got handcuffed to the cage. Piper was in here refereeing and he got punked too. The ring announcer explained to fans that Jarrett and Nash won the match, despite the fact that referee Piper had not ruled a decision and Jarrett wasn't even technically a member of Nash's team. So let's see here. They did absolutely nothing to add tension to the Goldberg vs. Bret Hart main event at Starrcade. They gave us no reason to want to see that match. Additionally, they didn't give us any reason to want to see one single bout on that show. They also didn't give us one goddamn match on a two-hour show with a clean finish. Absolutely the most worthless Thunder ever.

WCW Saturday Night (December 18 — Taped): This was an exciting show as usual. Scott Armstrong d. Dave Taylor, Disorderly Conduct d. Villanos, Dean Malenko d. Chris Adams, Meng d. Dave Burkhead, Chuck Palumbo d. Mark Jindrak (which has to be carry for something), Booker T d. Devon Storm, Disco Inferno d. Sonny Siaki, Sid d. Al Greene. I joke regularly that Al Greene was, at one time, the number-one contender for the WCW Heavyweight Title. The more I think about it, however, the more I think that perhaps Al Greene is the future savior of WCW. History indicates that when he was the number-one contender, Nitro was regularly kicking Raw's ass. Now that he's become a Saturday Night guy, Nitro is getting whipped. Perhaps someone on the Internet reading this can start a BRING BACK AL GREENE campaign.

WCW Monday Nitro (December 20 — Live): This was the big one... Madusa beat Buzzkill with help from Spice. Disgraceful. Madusa actually forgot to bring the Cruiserweight Title to the building with her. What an important belt... Some guy in a Scream mask attacked Shane... Piper arrived with his kid... Hennig d. Hugh Morris after Morris was distracted by his "dad" walking around ringside in a hospital gown... Russo met with Piper and told him he needed to go out and tell the fans he sold out. Russo demanded Piper take the heat for him for the screwjob at the PPV. Piper "shot" on him, saying he absolutely wouldn't sell out. There was horrible audio

for this segment but Roddy did a good job... Tony recapped the original Montreal screwjob, mentioning Vince McMahon and the WWF by name. Tony even said that some insiders think "Russo scripted the finish of that match". Weird... Nash came out and cut another "shoot" promo running down the office. Several very naughty words made it past the censors, although they did manage to get bleeped out on the West Coast feed. He accused Bret of screwing Goldberg. This was a really good promo by Nash for once in his life... Flynn NC Tank when security separated them. Tank is back to having been thrown out of UFC this week... Revolution came out and called Duggan into the ring to renounce America. Hacksaw wouldn't do it, so the Revolution beat him up. Good heat for that. Shane threatened to burn the US flag, but Konnan, Kidman and Rey ended up returning to make the save... Piper came out and cut yet another "shoot" promo. He said he sold out. He said the fans didn't want to see scripted finishes, they wanted to see real fighting. He said he was a real fighter and wasn't going to do all this stupid shit. "I quit!" he said. Another really good interview. Goldberg came out and told Piper he had made the wrong decision at Starrcade, but that everyone makes mistakes. Bret came out to heavy boos. He told both guys that this was all the office's fault. He said he was going to take the belt and tell Russo to shove it up his ass. Crowd started cheering Bret, probably for saying "ass". Bret went backstage, threw the belt at Vince, and said he was vacating it. Russo said he had screwed Goldberg to make it up to Bret for what happened in Montreal. He signed Bret vs. Goldberg for the vacant title in the Nitro main event. Good angle at the top of the 9:00 hour... Bobby got a "Why, Bret, why?" in here somewhere... I was waiting for "Goldberg screwed Goldberg", but I didn't get it... Knobs & Finley d. Norman Smiley & Meng when Knobs pinned Norman in the same bathroom Benoit and Kevin Sullivan brawled in years ago... Maestro d. Evan after help from Symphony. Maestro must be a hell of a worker, because this was a good match... Piper grabbed a bat and went bonkers. He went searching for Russo. He destroyed Vince's office, which ended up being a set. Up until this point, I thought there was an office with white concrete walls in every Arena around America. Russo was gone... Kanyon d. Page & Bigelow in a three-way. Kanyon looks like Mick Foley when he was 18 and playing Dude Love. Page and Bigelow double-teamed Kanyon for a long time. Page then turned on Bigelow, gave him a Diamond Cutter, and left. On his way back to the dressing room, he kissed a female fan to get over his angle with Bagwell. Kanyon KO'd Bigelow with a champagne bottle for the pin. Bigelow was bleeding heavily and looked messed up. Good heat... Nash NC Creative Control when Hall, who was on crutches, miraculously healed and helped Nash beat them up... Jarrett d. Benoit in a ladder match to win the US Title. Benoit KILLED Jarrett forever. Jarrett's knee then "went out" and he fell outside. Benoit set the ladder up and tried to climb, but all the rungs broke. Jarrett then miraculously healed and KO'd Chris with his guitar. Benny Hinn must have been in the Arena somewhere. Jarrett found another ladder under the ring, set it up, and grabbed the belt. At least it was a creative screwjob. This was on its way to being one of the best matches of the whole year until the screwjob... Sid d. Wall—DQ when Berlyn interfered. Sid powerbombed Alex after the match and then formed a new team with Wall. Yawn... Disco met with Big Daddy Marinara, who told him he either joined The Family or died... Varsity Club d. Harlem Heat. The Club was SO not over. Kimona is now called "Le Meow". PG-13 debuted after this match but nobody recognized them or cared... Daphne Unger bit Jerry Only after he tried to hit on her backstage. Vamp called her a "crazy bitch". Oh!... David and Daphne, who are now officially An Item, came out. They called out Vamp. Vamp and Jerry Only came out, but David

and Daphne beat the s' out of them with the crowbar. What a mixed tag match that will be... Gene interviewed Bagwell. Since Gene is perpetually horny, he grilled Bagwell about the rumors of him and Kimberly having an affair. Bagwell didn't want to comment. Gene pressed on, asking if Bagwell had "been there". Buff finally went off, saying he'd boink Kimberly if he had a chance. Page ran out and kicked Buff's ass. Security had to break it up. This is now far into the realm of being a wrestling angle... Backstage, Piper preached to the locker room about how they should form a union and care for their family and tell management to suck it. The crowd was booing this. Piper said he was leaving now. We had heard that about 20 times already... Bret beat Goldberg. Sort of. There was a ref bump. Bret put Goldberg in the Figure Four. Hall and Nash then ran out with bats and attacked Goldberg. Bret stood up, grabbed a bat, and started pounding on Goldberg as well. IT WAS A SWERVE ALL ALONG. Who could have predicted it? Tons of heat for this. Piper ran down and tried to protect Goldberg. Unfortunately, he covered Goldberg's body before Bret had a chance to make the pin. So the ref decided that the show must go on, and counted three even though Piper was covering Goldberg and Bret was just bebopping around. Bret was awarded the title. If I've said it once, I've said it a million times. No matter who is in charge of WCW, it's still WCW. Jarrett ran out and KO'd Piper with a guitar. Hall, Nash, Jarrett and Bret then spraypainted "NWO" on Piper and Goldberg. The original NWO music played. There was a HUGE positive reaction for this from the crowd, which is good news for WCW. Despite the unforgivable screw-up with Piper pinning Goldberg and Bret getting the belt, I think this played out about as well as they could have expected. The best show of the Russo era.

ECW News and Notes

- After giving them chance after chance after chance, Paul Heyman finally fired Chris Candido and Tammy Sytch last Thursday. An announcement was immediately made on the ECW website confirming the release. There have been numerous situations over the past several weeks that had almost everybody in the company wondering why the two still had a job. Heyman initially gave them another chance after demanding they enroll in Community College so they'd have something to fall back on when their wrestling careers ended. They enrolled, but the problems continued, often publicly in Internet posts by Candido. This had to have been a tough decision for Paul, since the main reason he kept giving them chances was because he feared they'd end up like Eddie Gilbert or Brian Pillman. Unfortunately, by giving them chances, he kept them heavily involved in a business that is tough enough on people without any addictions, much less people who have admitted to them on national television. Hopefully, this release will be for the best for everyone involved.
- Heyman also fired Axl Rotten, although that was due more to morale issues in the locker room.
- Masato Tanaka won the ECW Heavyweight Title from Mike Awesome at the TNN Tapings in Nashville, TN on 12/17. Awesome gets a return match on December 23rd, shortly before Tanaka returns to Japan, so Awesome may have the belt back by the time you read this. Full results in the ECW On Tour section.

ECW On Tour

Cookeville, TN (December 16): Tracy Smothers d. Tom Marquez, Nova & Kid Cash & Jazz d. Dupps, Jerry Lynn d. Simon Diamond, Roadkill & Mikey Whipwreck d. CW Anderson & Bill Wiles, Mike Awesome d. Angel, Balls Mahoney d. Vic Grimes, Sandman d. Sal E. Graziano, Super Calo & Super Crazy d. Ikuto Hidaka & Yoshihiro Tajiri, Masato Tanaka d. Kintaro Kanemura, Rob Van Dam d. Uganda, Raven & Tommy Dreamer d. Storm & Justin Credible. They were giving away comp tickets to the Nashville TNN show here. No, that's not a great deal. That means they didn't sell enough tickets and are having to paper the building.

Nashville, TN (December 17 — TNN Tapings): Danny Doring & Roadkill d. Nova & Cash and Dupps in a three-way, Super Crazy d. Ikuto Hidaka, Kintaro Kanemura d. Tracy Smothers, Jerry Lynn d. Little Guido, Yoshihiro Tajiri d. Super Calo, Masato Tanaka d. Mike Awesome to win the ECW Heavyweight Title. Said to be an outstanding match. Awesome offered to shake Tanaka's hand after the match, but gave him a cheapshot clothesline instead. What a dick. Rob Van Dam d. Mikey Whipwreck to retain the TV Title, Tommy Dreamer d. Lance Storm. They also taped several angles to set up PPV matches. What a novel concept.

Chatanooga, TN (December 18): Danny Doring & Roadkill d. Bill Wiles & CW Anderson, Mike Awesome d. Simon Diamond, Nova & Jazz & Kid Cash d. Dupps, Lance Storm d. Jerry Lynn, Super Crazy & Super Calo d. Yoshihiro Tajiri & Ikuto Hidaka, Masato Tanaka d. Kintaro Kanemura to retain the ECW Title, Spike Dudley d. Little Guido, Sabu d. Tracy Smothers, Raven & Tommy Dreamer & Balls Mahoney d. Baldies, Rob Van Dam d. Rhino to retain the TV Title.

ECW On Television

ECW on TNN (December 17 — Taped): The show opened with an absolutely horrendous interview with the Impact Players... Chris Chetti confronted Nova and Cash backstage. He said he was coming back despite doctor's orders. Nova told him not to. Chetti warned Cash not to screw over Nova... New Jack d. Tony DeVito, but the Generic Baldies beat him up afterwards. I wonder if Jack knows what a wristlock is. The Baldies then issued an open challenge to anyone in the building. Oh no, I can sense a Paul Heyman Special already. Mike Awesome came out and attacked the Baldies. It turned into an Awesome vs. Vic Grimes match, which Awesome won after a scary powerbomb over the top rope through a table on the floor. After the match, Spike Dudley's music played and he ran out and destroyed Awesome with an Acid Drop. OK, they've killed Awesome for good now... Styles called what we'd just seen "unfathomable". For once, he was exactly right... Tom Marquez NC Ikuto Hidaka & Super Crazy in a three-way when Sabu ran in and destroyed everyone. He put all three men through a table for good measure... Justin Credible & Lance Storm d. Chris Candido & Rhino in a very good match. Rhino accidentally gored Candido for the finish. Sandman ran down, as fast as a man can run knowing he can't get to the ring until his four minute entrance music has played all the way through, but

the Impact Players jumped him. You know, it's a good thing Sandman's entrance music isn't Stairway to Heaven. Rhino gored Sandman through a table for good measure... The show ended with Raven cutting a promo to Francine about how he was trying to do the right thing. She said she understood.

Etcetera

- HAPPY HOLIDAYS to everyone out there in newsletter-land. Thanks also for another great year. You all rule. As a special gift, if Y2K renders your home without lights or heat, feel free to burn these newsletters first. Especially any that you have dating back to 1995 or so.
- Craig continues to improve and has been told to begin putting weight on his gimpy foot. The doctor told him to put "about 140 pounds on it", which must be a rib because the last time I saw his foot it must have weighed at least 190 pounds. He is getting around with the help of crutches and refuses to use the wheelchair they gave him. I think he's afraid there's an ejection seat like on the Buff Bagwell doll. He hopes to be walking around by January, and wanted me to say thanks to all the readers for their continued cards and letters.
- Make sure you check out the "Off the Top Rope" radio show if you live in the Chicago area, hosted by our good buddy Brian Schenk. It currently airs from 7:00 to 8:30 AM on WEEF AM 1430 every Saturday morning. Brian is also selling tapes of his show, and you can receive a sample copy for \$2 to PO Box 6082, Lindenhurst, IL 60046. For more information, you can e.mail Brian at his new e.mail address: offthetoprobe@mailcity.com.
- Thanks for reading this week!

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